

SLOW SMOKED BOSTON BUTT

The following amounts were used for two 8-10 pound roasts. If you have one roast, cut the amounts in half as a starting point. (This is not rocket science and the amounts can be adjusted up or down depending on your individual preference.)

Brine: (Added comments – for two roasts could double the spices and herbs to give more flavor)

Water - 4 quarts (alternative is 3 qts water and one qt apple juice) Ice - 2 quarts

Sugar - ½ cup Salt - ½ cup

1 Tablespoon of each of the following powders or grinds:

Allspice Onion Garlic Sage Oregano (dried or fresh)

1 Teaspoon of each of the following powders or grinds:

Cloves Cayenne Pepper Chile Dry Mustard Adolph's Meat Tenderizer (optional)

2 Tablespoons of each of the following dried herbs:

Italian herbs Parsley flakes

Bay Leaves - 2

Heat one (1) quart of water in a pot large enough to hold about three (3) quarts of water. Bring to near boiling. Slowly added Salt and Sugar while stirring until both are dissolved.

Lower heat setting to maintain temperature below boiling (not critical).

Add the spices and herbs while stirring to prevent clumping. (Suggest adding Italian herbs and Parsley last.)

Let the “brine” simmer for 5-10 minutes. Turn off heat and add second quart of water to the pot.

Use a large pot that will accommodate the two roast.

Add ice and one quart of water (or the apple juice) to the pot. Pour the brine into the pot.

Remove roasts from the packaging and rinse with cold water. (Score the fat with a sharp knife.)

Place both roast in the pot and arrange them so that they are barely covered with the iced water/brine mix. (Add as much of the fourth quart of water or additional ice as needed to barely cover the meat.)

Waiting game

Cover the pot and place in refrigerator for 48 hours (not critical – 24 hours may be enough).

Every 8 to 12 hours turn the roasts in the pot – the herbs and spices will not totally dissolve in the water and may have a tendency to settle toward the bottom of the pot. Turning the roasts will improve the uniformity of the contact of these solids with the meat while in the brine.

Prep prior to smoking

One hour before you plan to start cooking the roast, remove the roasts from the ice water, drain and place in a shallow bowl or pan.

Sprinkle Worcestershire sauce and coat all the surfaces of the roasts. In 30 minutes turn the roast over in the pan so that the top side also has good contact with the Worcestershire sauce. (This would be a good time to start preheating your smoker.)

When the smoker temperature is up to about 200 F, remove the roast from the Worcestershire sauce and add your favorite dry rub (optional).

Smoking :

Place one roast in a shallow pan with side of about 2 inches. Put the meat in the pan on the lower grill level in the smoker. The pan will catch the juices and will serve to baste the roast during the time in the smoker. (Start with the fat side up.)

Repeat the above with the second roast except place on a higher grill level in the smoker.

Smoke for 3 - 4 hours with a temperature set point of 200 F. Carefully remove the pans and turn the roast over in the au jus collected in the pans. Return the pans and meat to the smoker.

Repeat this process until the center temperatures of the roasts have reached 165 F. (Check the temperature at the six hour and nine hour times.)

If the temperature is close to 160 F (which it should be in 8 to 9 hours), cover the roasts (still in the pan with the au jus) with Al foil and turn the smoker set point to 165 F and leave it for another two or three hours. This should allow the collagen to be transformed into a gelatin form which produces very tender meat.

Finishing:

Remove the pans from the smoke and without removing the roasts from the pans, cover the roasts in Aluminum foil and let rest for at least 30 minutes or until the rest of the meal is done or it is convenient to process the meat.

Serving:

For “pulled pork” cut the roast into reasonable size chunks of meat and start the “pulling process.” I find that using two forks to pull the meat into strands works well. As you pull, remove excess fat and sinew as needed. Use the pulled pork in Bar-B-Que sandwiches with your favorite sauce or mix it with you favorite baked bean recipe.

The roast can also be served in slices – I typically target for ½ inch thick slices. It is better to cut across the “grain” when possible. The slices can be used as an entree with a meal or used for sandwiches. Again, remove extra fat, sinew and gristle in this step. (Slicing is a lot less work than “pulling” the pork, but some purist really like “pulled pork.”)

The juices collected in the pans can be added to moisten either the pulled pork or the pork slices as you might desire. There will be a lot more au jus than is practical to use with the amount of pork you have. One suggestion is to refrigerate the juice and remove the fat. The remaining au jus can be used in homemade soups and as stock flavoring for cooking vegetables.

Practical tips:

1. You can count on having about half the weight of cooked meat as was the starting weight of the roast. As the meat cooks it loses water and fat and in the post-cooked processing, additional fat and bone are discarded.
2. Typically one pound of pulled pork will served 4 or 5 people. (Using a regular sized hamburger bun, you can get 6 sandwiches per pound.)
3. I have cooked a version of this leaving out the salt for a friend who was on a no-salt diet. It worked out quite well.